



HARLOW U3A NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER 2025



CHAIR'S REPORT

I feel my Christmas has already started: we had a lovely trip to Thursford Christmas Spectacular; I have had two Christmas meals, one with a group of friends I have known for over forty years and another with members of my church, I chatted there with people I did not know well and hopefully now know better; I have sung in my first concert with New Edition Singers and attended John's concert with Harlow Singers. I do enjoy singing and attending concerts. We went to see the ballet, a live broadcast of Cinderella, and it was rather like a u3a trip there were so many members there! I expect to see many of them at the live broadcast of the Nutcracker next week- another Christmas tradition.

We will have had our Christmas social by the time you read this; I do hope you were able to join us and I hope you are able to see friends and family over this festive period, sharing time and memories together.

Happy Christmas everyone!

Jane Winterbotham



SECRETARY'S NOTES

HARLOW u3a ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING (AGM) MONDAY 26 January 2026

The 4th Annual General Meeting of Harlow U3A CIO will be held on **Monday 26 January 2026, 10:40 a.m. at The Link Social Club, Parsloe Rd. Harlow**, The date of the notice is in the email which was sent to members on 19 November and which also contains more detail about the AGM. Check-in begins at 9:30 a.m.; announcements will be at 10:30 and the AGM at 10:40.

All members of Harlow u3a have a vote at the AGM. If you're unable to vote in person you can ask another member of Harlow u3a to vote on your behalf. This is called a proxy vote; you can apply to use your proxy vote via the form which was sent out with the email on 19 November. This can also be downloaded from our website/Meetings/scroll down to AGM 2026. You must apply by 5pm on 20 January 2026, 6 working days before the AGM.

We look forward to seeing you at our AGM and encourage you to participate actively in operating our U3A in any role that interests you. Copies of AGM information are available on the website. <https://harlow.u3asite.uk/events/>

Lorna Walsh, Secretary for the Trustees (harlowu3a.sec@gmail.com)



A FANTASTIC OPPORTUNITY FOR HARLOW u3a MEMBERS

I'm sure you have lots of thoughts and opinions on how Harlow u3a is organised and managed. Probably, there have been many times when you have been thankful for the social and learning opportunities it provides and conversely there may have been times when you have felt things could be improved on and – dare I say- you've felt you could have done it better! Well now's your chance. Stand as a trustee and be part of the group of dedicated members who give up their time and energy to manage our organisation.

Some of our key trustees/officers have one year left to serve; now would be a great time to join the committee, find out how the organisation is run and be ready to take over in 2027. You can bring your own skill set and ideas to share on how Harlow u3a moves forward; fresh ideas are always welcome. To find out more, contact the Secretary, Lorna Walsh: harlowu3a.sec@gmail.com or any other committee member. Nominations are invited in time for the AGM on 26 January 2026.

If members do not come forward to replace those retiring from post, our u3a will cease to function. It's a worthwhile role so come forward and take it on.



NEW MEMBERS' MEETING

It was lovely to meet some of our newest members at the Welcome Meeting at The Link Social Club on 21 November. After being introduced to key members of the committee, they heard a number of facilitators talk about their groups then had the opportunity to chat to them in more detail about the opportunities on offer.

A wide variety of groups were represented including walkers, fitness, crafting, culture, music and gardening to name a few. We hope our "newbies" enjoy exploring what's on offer and remember, if a group is currently full, ask about being placed on the waiting list; if your interest isn't



represented think about starting a new group – the Groups Co-ordinators are more than willing to help you set it up.

To contact any of the group facilitators follow this link: . <https://harlow.u3asite.uk/group-facilitators-email-contact/> scroll down to the group you're interested in then click on the link to open a Contact page to message the group leader.





CHRISTMAS SOCIAL 2025



Members thoroughly enjoyed their Christmas Social at The Link Social Club on 8 December. A Christmas themed table quiz got everyone chatting as they worked together to answer the questions, fuelled by the mince pies and stollen bites that had been provided.

Harlow u3a Choir, led by Musical Director Roisin Quinn, performed to a packed house: traditional Christmas Carols, Gospel songs, a sea shanty and Christmas number ones. The audience was in fine voice and joined in with many of the songs: one of the highlights was the singing of The Twelve Days of Christmas with different tables taking on a day each. The consensus was that the "five gold rings" singers won the day!



It was a joyous occasion and a fitting end to another successful year for Harlow u3a.



FUTURE GUEST SPEAKERS

- 26 Jan. 2026** Harlow u3a AGM 10.40am The Link
 Guest Speaker: We are delighted to welcome back Nicholas Henderson who will be speaking on the [History of English Churches](#); this will be his third visit to Harlow u3a. If you haven't attended his talks before, don't worry as each one is self-contained. Past talks have been a great success, with Nicholas being a very entertaining speaker. 11am-12pm
- 23 Feb.** [My TUTU Went AWOL!](#) A trained opera singer, Iestyn's talk includes excerpts from his West End shows and tells how he accidentally went on tour dancing Sugar Plum around the war-zones of Iraq and Afghanistan, raising the morale of British troops - in a tutu! Iestyn Edwards The Link

VISITS & OUTINGS



BRICK LANE MUSIC HALL PANTOMIME

Roll up! Roll up! Don't miss out on a fantastic trip for members of Harlow u3a to [Brick Lane Music Hall on Tuesday 27 January](#). **There are some tickets remaining** for this pantomime for grown-ups, Jack and His Giant Stalk, also included in the price is a delicious Afternoon Tea. What a treat! Total cost is £71.50pp. (The breakdown of costs is coach into London £14 and the panto with afternoon tea £57.50.)



Grab this chance to say a final goodbye to the Christmas season with a panto which Encore magazine describes as, "Probably the best and funniest pantomime I've ever seen....An old fashioned sense of fun. The perfect antidote to the February blues."

Don't delay! To order your tickets contact Barb Abbott - use this link: <https://harlow.u3asite.uk/group-facilitators-email-contact/> scroll down to Visits and Outings and use the link to open the Contact page.



CHRISTMAS FUN IN MILTON KEYNES



The weather had turned particularly cold when we travelled to Milton Keynes for our annual Christmas shopping trip, but it was nice and warm on the coach and we were off out for the day so we were all in high spirits. We arrived nice and early and, despite road works stopping us getting to the coach parking, Patrick found a space very close to the centre to drop us off and we were once again back in the warm surrounded by lots of shops.

The middle of the shopping area had a magnificent Christmas lights display and a small, but varied, Christmas market.



After we had shopped, drunk lots of hot beverages and eaten our fill, we all got on the coach very happy with our purchases and Patrick took us home again safely.

In the warmth of the coach, I'm sure there were a few sleepy eyes and snoozes behind me. **Hazel Sugarman.**



GROUP NEWS

CONTACTING FACILITATORS

To contact facilitators regarding group activities, follow the link below which will take you to a list of the groups and their facilitators; by clicking on the facilitator you wish to message you will open a Contact page to complete. <https://harlow.u3asite.uk/group-facilitators-email-contact/>

Ideas for new groups for 2026? Maybe there's an activity or interest missing from our existing offering. If you would like to explore setting up a new group next year, our friendly Groups Co-ordinators, Vipin & Joan, would be happy to help you. Contact them on: HarlowU3A.GroupsCoord@gmail.com



GAMES GROUP UPDATE


We promise we *haven't forgotten you!* Our Games Group (board games/cards) launch hit a tiny pause, but we're ready to roll the dice again — we just need a bit more info to get things started.

To help us plan, if you're interested in being part of this group, could you let us know:

 **What board games/card games do you enjoy playing?**

 **Do potential group members already have these games, or do we need to add to our collection?**

 **Any suggestions on where we could hold our meetings?** Please bear in mind it needs to be accessible for those without a car.

 **Time and day?** We're thinking of Tuesday or Thursday afternoon.

We're hoping to meet for a friendly coffee in January to get things moving. If you'd like to join us, please let us know — the more, the merrier! Contact Vipin Patel, Groups Co-ordinator, HarlowU3A.GroupsCoord@gmail.com and we'll get back to you about when and where. **Ann Nutt**



SEW N SEWS PREPARE FOR CHRISTMAS

The Sew & Sews met recently to make Christmas wreaths. Our instructor was Jena of J&J Florals, who supplied all of the wet-moss bases, the different versions of greenery and a large variety of decorations for the finishing touches. She guided us all to produce magnificent displays and gave us tips on how to make the wreaths last the season.

The mulled wine and Baileys cake was delicious and everyone had a fabulous time. As you can see from the picture, we all produced wonderful wreaths all very different from each other. J&J Florals are local florists, who are newly trained, with fabulous modern and traditional ideas and a fantastic range of displays. **Hazel Sugarman.**





HERE COMES 2026

The New Year brings new ideas, new people and new thoughts. I have been with Harlow u3a for eighteen years now, which confirms what a splendid friendly group it is and over the years it has given me many hours of pleasure. So, maybe in 2026 you might like to think about any of the following activities, none of which meet on regular days but when an organisation has time to fit us in or we can fit in with them.

Exploring World Faiths



Over the years we have received talks in various halls and places of worship, about Judaism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Quakerism, Islam, the Mormons and Humanism. Perhaps I have left something out or you were unable to attend the original talk. Do let me know if you would like me to organise something

Music in Mind - Taking Music into Care Homes and Day Centres

We visit various residential homes and day centres, taking in music and songs of the 60s and 70s plus instruments, maybe balloons, and certainly smiling faces. Our visit lasts for 45 minutes and you don't need any musical skills, just enthusiasm to sing WITH the visitors.



Please get in touch if this appeals to you or anything else which might be of interest. You can contact me on the groups link to Arts In and Around Harlow. **Ann Flint**

HARLOW u3a STROLLERS 2 GROUP



The Strollers 2 walk was on Thursday 4 December.

Eleven members braved the rain and drizzle to walk along the cycle tracks from Rectory Lane playing field to the town centre library where we stopped for a coffee-break and chat! **Vipin Patel**



HARLOW U3A CHOIR

Members of the choir sang for the residents of Alexandra House Care Home on 3 December bringing some festive cheer – and varying designs of Christmas jumpers. Popular carols encouraged some of the audience to join in and it was a very happy interlude enjoyed by all.

You've heard the expression having "to sing for your supper", well the choir sang for their lunch, which they thoroughly enjoyed, at Canons Brook Golf Club on 4 December. Another organisation shared the venue on the day and requested the choir sing for them, which they were happy to do. Good food, good company, what more could one desire?



u3a Harlowe Choir
2025 Christmas Concert
 JOIN US!
 For a seasonal celebration of singing
 and community
 Pop, gospel, classical & traditional
SPECIAL GUEST PERFORMANCES
 Audience singing
ALL WELCOME

Friday 12th December
 6pm
 St. Paul's Church
 Harlow CM20 1LP
FREE entry
 No booking required, just turn up!
 Retiring collection: profits to Streets2Homes



U3A FRIENDS COMMUNITY

DO YOU RECEIVE THE THIRD AGE TRUST (TAT) MAGAZINE IN THE POST FROM THE u3a?



The magazine, u3a Matters, which is produced five times a year, is posted to those members who have requested to receive it; if you are one of those, do you actually read it or does it get thrown into the recycling bin? Are you aware that Harlow u3a is charged for these magazines?

If you don't read it and are ready to cancel receipt, or if you are happy to read it online, it will save us money and help keep our membership subscriptions low. Please tell our Membership Secretary, Chris Chesham, at January's General Meeting (she's the person who checks you in) or e-mail her at u3aharlowmemsec@gmail.com if you no longer wish to receive the magazine. You can read it online (current and past issues) via this link: [MAGAZINE](#)

REPRESENT HARLOW u3a

We are in the East of England Region of the u3a Council and the representative for our region is Ian Matthews. He has asked us to share the following invitation to consider volunteering to join him as a regional representative, with all our local members:

It is coming to the end of the year in which Regional Council Representatives (CR) have been getting to know their new role and to get to know their region's u3as. We are now coming toward the 2nd year, a year for which I have decided to continue in my role as East of England Council Representative. I am currently the only CR in the East of England Region, covering 140 u3as and we are now seeking an additional CR.

The creation of the u3a Council is a significant move towards putting u3a members and the issues that matter to them at the heart of everything the Third Age Trust does. Key to the success of the Council will be having the right people come forward to be Council Representatives. The role of Council Representatives will be to ensure that the voice of u3as in their area is heard. If successful, you will act as a conduit between the Trust and u3as in your area, ensuring that their views help to shape the strategy of the Trust. Being a Representative on the u3a Council will be a rewarding role. If you are a 'people person' and interested in putting yourself forward for this role, please get in touch with me either by email: ian.mathews@u3a.org.uk or call me for an informal chat on 07471211347.

Best regards,
Ian Matthews



THE DATES FOR THE FORTHCOMING ELECTIONS ARE:-

- 8 January 2026 - Nominations open
- 3 February 2026 - Nominations Closing
- 17 February - Elections Open
- w/c 2 March (TBC) - Hustings
- 24 March - Elections Closing
- 1 April - Newly elected Council Representatives start in post
- 23 April - First in-person Council Meeting in London



CHRISTMAS DINGBATS- CAN YOU SOLVE THEM? Answers on last page

<p>1 Nigmasht</p>	<p>2 stun</p>	<p>3 SPEAR SHEPHERDS PEPPER APPLE GARDEN COTTAGE</p>	<p>4 MISTLETOE XXXX</p>
<p>5 Night Night Night Night Night Night Night Night Night Night Night Night</p>	<p>6 XMAS</p>	<p>7 ABCDEFGHIJKLMNO PQRSTUVWXYZ ABCDEFGHIJKLMNO PQRSTUVWXYZ</p>	<p>8 PPPPPPP our planet</p>
<p>9 Hello Spring! Hi Summer! Howdy Autumn! Ho, Winter!</p>	<p>10 <u>LEFT</u> TURKEY</p>	<p>11 Pre sents</p>	<p>12 Y Y MEN Y</p>



UPDATE ON THE ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI) INTRODUCTION

Following on from the very successful AI meeting led by Stephen and Nicola, which many of our members attended in October, Nicola has been in touch to let us know that the social media pages for Facebook and Instagram are now “live”. Many members were keen to know when they would be live, so they could start following. Here are the links and a message from Nicola:



<https://www.facebook.com/share/1DW9M8e3zx/?mibextid=wwXlfr>

https://www.instagram.com/the_aicentre_forharlow?igsh=Mm92MDdyeTBxdWI%3D&utm_source=qr

“If any of the members would be happy to leave reviews on the Social Media pages from what they got from the sessions, this would be very helpful to us to build the reach out to people -Thank you.” We are looking at next year’s calendar to arrange a follow-up session.



LOCAL HARLOW NEWS

FUTURE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT: TAKE PART IN THE CONSULTATION

Harlow Council is calling on residents to take part in the Government’s consultation on the future of local government in Essex and to back the option that keeps local decision-making closest to home. The Government is proposing a major reorganisation of councils across Essex, replacing the current two-tier system of county and district councils with new unitary authorities responsible for all local services. For more information, and to find the link to take part in the consultation click here: [CONSULTATION](#)

The Mindful Life Group

Dedicated to older adult mental health

A **FREE** six-week online program
for Essex residents

Spaces limited to 15

Mindfulness for Older Adults who Care

Thursday 29th January 2026 10am-11am

- Designed by Clinical Psychologists
- Delivered by BAMBA-Registered Mindfulness Teachers

Our course is proven to increase wellbeing and resilience

Visit our website
www.the-mindful-life.com
to find out more and apply



We are a Clinical Psychology led organisation and aim to provide robust interventions to support good mental health and reduce dementia risk.

- ✓ Evidence-Based
- ✓ Tailored for over 65s



DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

16 Dec.	Tea & Show Canary Wharf		
12 Jan. 2026	Committee Meeting	St James’s Church	10am
16 Jan.	Deadline for January’s Newsletter		
26 Jan.	AGM and General Meeting	The Link CM19 4RT	10am-12pm
27 Jan.	Trip to Brick Lane Music Hall: Afternoon Tea & Pantomime		
17 Feb.	Trip to V&A Museum & Marie Antoinette Collection		



GET IN TOUCH

You can contact **Committee Members and Facilitators** by email through links on the website. harlow.u3asite.uk . Using this method keeps personal information out of the public domain. The **Harlow U3A Newsletter** is published by Harlow U3A, a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO), Registered Charity Number 1197680. The registered office of the CIO is in England, at 2 Wych Elm, Harlow, Essex, CM20 1QP. **Contact the Editor** with comments and contributions at: harlowu3anewsletter@gmail.com

ANSWERS TO CHRISTMAS DINGBATS:

- | | | | |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------|---|--------------------------------------|
| 1 Midnight Mass | 2 Mixed Nuts | 3 Mince (Mints) Pies | 4. Kisses under the mistletoe |
| 5 Twelfth Night | 6 White Christmas | 7 Noel, Noel (No L) | 8 Peace on Earth |
| 9. Seasons Greetings | 10 Leftover turkey | 11 Opening Presents (Opening in presents) | 12 Three Wise Men |



Merry Christmas to

all our readers and many thanks

to our Committee and Group Facilitators for

all your hard work this year.